

**REMARKS**

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action mailed on August 13, 2004. Reexamination in light of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 are currently pending in this application, with claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19, 21, 24 and 26 being independent.

No new matter has been added.

**Claim amendments**

The claims have been amended to place the claims into better form for the convenience of the Examiner.

**Claim objections**

While not conceding the propriety of the objection to claim 10 and to advance the prosecution of the above-identified application, claim 10 has been amended as requested by the Examiner.

Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

**Restriction**

Claims 12-27 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Rejoinder of the claims is respectfully requested, at least for the reasons provided hereinbelow.

**New non-final Office Action**

If the allowance of claims 1-11 is not forthcoming at the very least and a new grounds of rejection made, then a **new non-final Office Action** is respectfully requested at least for the following reasons.

**Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103**

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0010658 to Suzuki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,429,810 to De Roche.

This rejection is traversed at least for the following reasons.

The above-identified application is entitled to benefit of the filing date of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-098555. This Japanese Patent Application has a priority date of March 31, 2000.

However, the filing date for Suzuki et al. of March 8, 2001 is later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application. Thus, Suzuki et al. is unavailable as prior art.

In addition, De Roche is entitled to benefit of priority based upon Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/179,536 filed February 1, 2000, Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/228,100, filed August 28, 2000 and Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/242,355, filed October 23, 2000. However, August 28, 2000 and October 23, 2000 are later than the priority date of the Japanese Patent Application. Thus, De Roche may also be unavailable as prior art.

Withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

**Conclusion**

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims now pending in the present application are allowable, and the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reexamination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and remarks is courteously solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone Brian K. Dutton, Reg. No. 47,255, at 202-955-8753 or the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

If any fee is required or any overpayment made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee or credit the overpayment to Deposit Account # 18-0013.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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